

Project: Hydrosol press release

Subject: Sugar reduction

Less sugar in dairy products, soft drinks, deli foods and vegan alternatives

Sugar reduction is an urgent issue – and new texturing systems provide the answer

Hamburg, August 2018 – Sugar reduction in foods is a topic of great interest around the world. In Germany, retailers are advertising the lower sugar content of their house brands. In Great Britain, since April of this year there has been a sugar tax on soft drinks. In other European as well as Latin American countries, nutrition traffic lights on packaging alert consumers to the sugar percentage in foods. In India, regulation to this effect is currently being finalised. The main driver for all this activity is the ominous increase in obesity on all continents, that is increasingly being linked to high sugar consumption. It is therefore no surprise that the number of sugar-reduced or sugar-free products is growing rapidly around the world. In just the past five years the number of product launches has more than doubled, from just under 5000 in 2012 to over 10,000 in 2017 worldwide. Soft drinks and dairy products are among the fastest-growing categories. This growth is set to continue, as obesity is a key risk factor for cardiovascular diseases that are a major strain on healthcare systems, and more and more governments are devoting attention to the issue. The new need is “low sugar,” and new solutions from retailers and industry are in higher demand than ever.

And here is where the challenge lies. From a technological point of view sugar has many desirable properties. It binds water, acts as a preservative, and is very readily soluble. Most importantly, it gives products flavour, body, texture and a pleasant mouth feel. Merely replacing sugar with intensive chemical sweeteners or alternative sweeteners is generally not a viable alternative for food manufacturers from a technical standpoint. Instead, they try to replicate the many functions of sucrose through combinations of other ingredients. This is just what the new stabilising and texturing systems from Hydrosol accomplish. In application testing, Hydrosol technologists and scientists have determined the optimum interplay of individual components in various food products. The result is individual ingredient combinations for foods like yogurt, drinking yogurt, mixed milk drinks and pudding, as well as for fruity refreshing drinks, energy drinks, ketchup and plant-based whipping creams.

“With our new stabilising and texturing systems we can compensate for lower sugar content,” reports Katharina Schäfer, Product Manager Dairy & Deli Foods at Hydrosol. “The targeted combination of different individual components gives each product the desired qualities. Hydrocolloids and starch give stability, body and a pleasing texture, while special plant fibres improve mouth feel.” A positive side effect is that if the fibre content is high enough, it can be marked on the product as an added health feature.

In order to get the requisite sweetness, depending on customer wishes Hydrosol uses low-cost conventional sweeteners or raw materials like stevia, which has a positive image with consumers. Natural flavourings round out the flavour profile. “Our sister company OlbrichtArom even offers a ‘sugar booster’ especially for sugar-reduced products. This

natural flavouring amplifies the delicate sweetness in the final product without affecting its characteristic flavour,” explains Schäfer.

Hydrosol’s new functional systems enable different sugar contents as desired, from sugar-reduced to sugar-free. “A reduction by 30 to 50 percent is relatively easy for us to achieve in most products. We follow European food law,” says Schäfer. This states that foods and beverages can be labelled as “reduced sugar” if they have at least 30 percent less sugar than comparable products, as long as calorie content is not higher than comparable products. For labelling as “low sugar” the consistency is the determining factor. Solid foods like yogurt can contain no more than 5 g sugar per 100 g food. For milk beverages, soft drinks and other liquids the upper limit is 2.5 g per 100 ml. “Sugar-free” products may not exceed 0.5 g sugar per 100 g or 100 ml.

About Hydrosol:

Hydrosol GmbH & Co. KG headquartered in Ahrensburg near Hamburg, Germany, is a fast-growing international supplier of food stabilisers, with subsidiaries around the world. Its specialists develop and produce tailor-made stabiliser systems for dairy products, ice cream and desserts, delicatessen and ready meals, as well as meat, sausage and fish products. The company also supplies solutions for beverages, and for vegetarian and vegan alternatives to meat and dairy products. With its international network of 16 subsidiaries and numerous qualified foreign representatives, the company is represented in the world's key markets. As a member of the independent, owner-operated Stern-Wywiol Gruppe with a total of twelve sister companies, Hydrosol can make use of many synergies. The company has access to the knowledge of some 80 R&D specialists and to the extensive applications technology of the large Stern Technology Center in Ahrensburg, Germany. It also benefits from shared production facilities and the Group's own logistics resources, so it can offer customers a high degree of flexibility and innovation capabilities. The Stern-Wywiol Gruppe is one of the world's most successful international suppliers of food & feed ingredients.

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